

**Illinois Early Learning Council
Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee
September 4, 2015
10am – 12pm**

Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60603

Call-in number: (888) 494-4032
Participant code: 6113045703

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Participants:

In-person: Teri Talan, Elliot Regenstein, Carmen Garcia, Jonathan Doster, Rose Gallagher, Maia Connors, Jenna Chapman, Larry Joseph, Erik Sandberg, Lauren Walker, Jon Furr, Niketa Brar, Charles Chang, and Constance Williams

Phone: Anna Colaner, Lauri Frichtl-Morrison, Serah Fatani, Mary Beth Corrigan, Brenda Klosterman, Pam Bonsu, Elizabeth Dabney, Reyna Hernandez, and Cindy Zumwalt

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes from the June 22, 2015 meeting were formally approved.

- 3. DCFS State Provider Database**

Erik Sandberg and Lauren Walker with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provided a presentation on the Statewide Provider Database (SPD). SPD is an online database with comprehensive information on social service agencies and programs throughout the state of Illinois. This system is open to DCFS staff and service providers throughout the state to identify and locate community resources for children and families. Currently, SPD contains information on 1,700 Illinois agencies, 4,100 programs and over 23,000 services. The items in SPD include programs with and without DCFS contracts. Interested users must register for access and DCFS staff will create a login and password. SPD tracks the regions in Illinois that are accessing the database. SPD staff is interested in who is using the tool and promoting the database in regions that may use it more sparsely. Access can be granted to several people from the same agency.

SPD Info is public database that any family can assess. SPD Info has links to other databases such as a substance abuse program locator. The DCFS SPD database contains several program types like: mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, parenting, early childhood, non-clinical and a newly created health clinics.

- Teri Talan asked what types of services will fall under health clinics. Erik Sandberg elaborated that health clinics are a program type that is being created and it will include items such as minute clinics, physical therapy, and dental services

Reyna Hernandez suggested that DCFS should work with school districts to promote the tool. Erik Sandberg confirmed that DCFS has been working with Chicago Public Schools for the past

two years and have been training social workers and school counselors. Work has occurred with other school districts as well.

- Teri Talan suggested connecting with public libraries to offer information more broadly.

DCFS SPD can produce maps that would aid in policy decisions. Maps are helpful in decisions related to resource allocation. Maps can be created on a more local level, like neighborhood maps and the location of social services. Maps can be generated in one to two weeks.

Niketa Brar asked if there is a method within the database to flag incorrect information. Erik Sandberg replied that there is not. If there is an error, users are encouraged to email a member of the SPD team. Options are being explored to allow agencies to edit their own information.

Elliot Regenstein asked if the SPD team has connected and intersected work with Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM). Erik Sandberg replied that over the past year Lauren Walker has worked with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development to add over 100 early childhood programs to SPD. But, SPD has not yet begun to work with IECAM. Larry Joseph stressed that IECAM is complementary to the DCFS SPD work because IECAM tracks demographic data and program enrollment.

- Elliot commented that the DRE could help connect SPD to partners such as Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and the Head Start state association for collaboration. Although the systems are different and serve diverse populations, there are multiple websites through which different audiences can search for information about programs, and it would be helpful to have a better sense of how those pieces fit together.

Teri Talan requested clarification regarding what types of programs would be found under the child care program type. Lauren Walker answered that parenting programs, home visiting and child care programs with a curriculum would be found under this category. Child care and early childhood programs can be found interchangeably in other program type searches. Head Start and Preschool For All programs are also found in the database. Because of the large amount of Head Start programs, it is recommended that users access the SPD Info site for the most up-to-date information. Erik Sandberg commented that SPD is beginning to work with ExceleRate.

Anna Colaner announced that there are new data components as a result of new Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations and that the SPD team should connect internally with Carol Morris at DCFS.

4. Updates

a. UECDS/LDS

Jon Furr provided an update. The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (LDS) has worked to establish data linkages among seven state agencies. Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (NIU) is now in the fourth month of project activity. Five out of the seven agencies have signed data sharing agreements to transfer data to NIU. Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Department of Human Services are in the processes of signing agreements and it is anticipated that they will sign-on within the next month. NIU is on pace to have the overall system in place with a functioning Master Client Index by late September or early October.

- A record matching project has been underway with the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator. Agencies use different identifiers so it is difficult to tell if a child receiving services from one agency is the same child in another agency. Linking information based on demographic variables across agencies to match and perform analysis has been a priority.
- The NIU team is creating the technical infrastructure. NIU is reviewing the demographic variables needed and creating data dictionaries. Configuration, data testing, confidence rating matching and preliminary data quality assessments are all underway. Work has begun to create an administrative dashboard tool so for agencies. The dashboard will provide an update of data matches and progress.

The LDS governing board is working on a public facing website to explain the LDS to interested parties such as parents, families and legislators. The website would explain the project, process and five priority areas. The website would provide a basic description of the work as it becomes available. The site is meant to communicate information. The site will have strong statements on privacy protections. The Department of Education has a list of best practices and state agencies are using that information and benchmarking what other states have done. The goal is to create one landing page with basic information and then providing links to other resource databases such as IECAM.

A grant application was submitted to the Institute of Education Sciences requesting \$7million in Longitudinal Data Systems funding. The state is expecting a decision by the end of the month. The grant would help better integrate the fiscal data that ISBE holds with child level data. Early childhood fiscal data could be then broken down at the local level for instructional use and then for the end-users in the K-12 space.

The preliminary merge between Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) data and Preschool For All has already occurred. Data quality is being reviewed. There are many records that have information missing or items were coded incorrectly. The dataset is being expanded to include site level data in Chicago by exploring monthly billing spreadsheets. Work is moving forward with Head Start to see how data can be integrated into the analysis. A discussion has also occurred with IECAM to assess how data from this project can be incorporated into IECAM's work.

- Larry Joseph requested clarification regarding the Preschool For All and CCAP data matching. CCAP looks at the monthly average of children served, but Preschool For All does not. Anna Colaner explained that there are different parameters set for matching children. Therefore, it is a point in time match. Standard practice in Illinois is to look at the month of October.

b. RTT-ELC

Anna Colaner presented an update. The Illinois General Assembly passed a bill to allow federal dollars to be used by agencies without a complete state budget. Prior to the bill, money was not being distributed to sites. Contracts are in process of being executed or will be executed very soon.

There are two research and evaluation projects underway. The first is a validation study done by Frank Porter Graham (FPG) at the University of North Carolina. FPG is working with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to perform local data collection. Programs are now being recruited for the study. There is a factsheet on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development's website that lists the study measures. A second evaluation is being led by the University of Illinois at Chicago to review the Ounce of Prevention Fund's work on preschool instructional excellence. The study will focus on the supports given to instructional leaders. Information will be shared once it is publically available.

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development paid for an oversample on the National Study of Early Education and now Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is looking at the workforce and issues of informal child care. The evaluation will review how informal care is being used, the supply and demand across the state.

c. REL-Midwest Project

Pam Bonsu provided an update. A report on the progress of states toward developing unified early childhood data systems was approved in late July and is now in limited distribution. The report can only be shared within the REL Midwest research alliance and DRE committee. The report will likely not go through the process of peer review, but there is interest in collaboration with other Regional Education Laboratories. If members of the DRE are interested in participating in further collaboration, additional details will be provided as information becomes available.

The bulk of the report focuses on what is happening in states and the questions related to early childhood longitudinal data systems. Most of the state work has been driven by federal funding. Typically there are eight to ten federal funding sources.

- Regarding the technical design, there is typically a federated data system where agencies retain their own data, followed by a single system with a data warehouse.
- Regarding actionable results, few states are using data systems because many are still testing and designing. Pennsylvania and Georgia, to an extent, are already using data to better understand early childhood education programs. These two states are now looking at fraud by reviewing program funding streams. Pennsylvania releases a report every other year on how well the state is doing.
- Conceptualization is the richest part of the developmental process because there are multiple stakeholders reviewing the needed data, access and revisions to policy questions. Illinois is in the conceptualization phase. It is not always clear where states are in the process of conceptualization but the report paints a picture of what it takes to design and bring multiple data systems together.

Teri Talan asked if states that have consolidated state agencies have had better data integration. Pam Bonsu replied that states that have gone through consolidation do not have to communicate with other agencies because data is housed under the same department, or secretariat as in Massachusetts. The governance was unclear at times,

but it was assumed that all programs would have access to and share data. In the case of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Georgia, it was easier to share data because there was no need for data sharing agreements.

Charles Chang asked if there was a sense of why some states picked one approach versus the other. Pam Bonsu replied that there were various reasons. Some states chose a federated system as a “work around” on confidentiality issues. Agencies and states have their own culture of data use. Agencies created data dictionaries to standardize data. In a data repository, a person who enters the data cannot change it. In this format, an agency cannot get a comprehensive view of their data because the information entered goes to the state, which then produces reports, typically annually. This limits an agency’s ability to answer policy questions.

- Teri Talan asked for more information regarding the difference of data systems and state choices of data system models. Elliot Regenstein replied that many states may have issues related to governance and recognize that building new integrated systems can be expensive. As a result, states must assess whether current systems can be successfully linked or if an entirely new system is needed. Pam Bonsu shared that Minnesota and Pennsylvania have a centralized data system. Pennsylvania is fragmented by programs and services. The users are in the larger office of early childhood and only have access to the system where the information is entered. Quality Rating and Improvement Systems and vendors do not have access the entire system. Questions related to end users are very important and should be explored.

Jon Furr asked a question regarding state that have a centralized data warehouse and the data elements that can be seen from other agencies. Elliot Regenstein said that South Carolina has the most centralized case and additional questions could be explored with South Carolina.

d. Research-Policy Partnership

Anna Colaner provided an update. The Early Childhood Research-Policy Forum, held on June 25, was a success. The Illinois Education Research Council is hosting a symposium on October 8 to 9 in Lisle. This meeting is for researchers and policy makers. It will focus on research issues and early childhood education is on the agenda with presentations by Phyllis Glink and Jon Furr. There is a session on early childhood and the workforce.

There are several brown bag sessions that will be brought to stakeholders. If other organizations are interested in participating or are hosting other own brown bag series, please contact Anna Colaner for possible collaboration.

e. Data Dashboard

Anna Colaner presented an update. IECAM will host the data dashboard. There is a six month plan to populate indicators one through three: economic security, high quality early learning for infants and toddlers, and high quality early learning for preschoolers. The NIU team will provide aggregate for the data dashboard with input from INCCRRA.

f. Early Learning Council Executive meeting

Teri Talan provided an update. The executive committee is exploring possible restructuring of the governance for programs serving children birth to five years old. Karen Ponder, a consultant, has planned several meetings to share models and lessons learned from other states. The last meeting lasted five hours and there were no conclusions on a preferred model, but a lot of questions were raised on the cost, losses and gains. Teri Talan indicated that she was thinking about restructuring from a data integration perspective and will provide a data lens for the executive committee.

5. Wrap-up/Additional Items

Teri Talan announced that she is working on a nationwide survey of principals to evaluate who is proving instructional leadership in schools. First, the National Association of Elementary School Principals will be contacted but she is requesting other suggestions from the DRE committee specific to Illinois. Serah Fatani asked Teri to email her and Beth Mascitti-Miller and they would connect Teri with a principal association in Chicago. Erika Hunt with Illinois State University does a lot of work with school leadership.

Anna Colaner announced that the Illinois Education Research Council has a report that is evaluating the partnership work of articulation between two- and four-year universities. The second round of the evaluation will occur within the coming year with a focus on the alignment of two- and four-year universities and innovation. More information can be found on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development's website.

Anna Colaner announced that there is an opportunity to expand the number of eligibility indicators that are currently being collected for Preschool For All. Preschool For All collects information on whether children are at risk and income criteria, but there is possibility that more indicators could be collected. Anna Colaner asked the DRE committee members to think about information that might be useful for ISBE to collect.

Regarding the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge, Anna Colaner mentioned the use of record matching to integrate data from across systems. It is possible that a common identifier could be expanded beyond ISBE's use and input is requested from the DRE committee. Elliot Regenstein asked Anna Colaner for a follow-up email with more information on the request and the timeframe needed for response. If needed, he suggested that a special meeting could be called to discuss the topic further.

Action Items

- **The DRE staffer will send the DCFS SPD team the email addresses of the DRE committee members. The DCFS SPD team will create log-ins for all users to access the database.**
- **The DRE co-chairs and staffer will connect the DCFS SPD team with potential partners, like IECAM, INCCRRA, and the state Head Start association.**
- **Anna Colaner will send an email with details regarding two projects that solicit DRE Committee member feedback. The DRE staffer will forward the information and call a special meeting, if necessary.**
- **The DRE staffer will ask the DRE committee members if they are interested in participating in follow-up stakeholder conversations on collaboration with other Regional Education Laboratories.**